UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.1
23 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
7-25 April 1997
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS FIFTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Czeslaw WIECKOWSKI (Poland)

Chapter ___

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development held its fifth session at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 25 April 1997. The Commission held ___ meetings (1st to ___ meetings).

2. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Mr. Rumen Gechev (Bulgaria), who also made a statement.

3. The Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

B. Attendance

4. The session was attended by representatives of ___ States. Representatives of organizations of the United Nations system, and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex ___ to the present report.

C. Election of officers

5. At the 1st and 4th meetings, on 8 and 9 April 1997, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mostafa Tolba (Egypt)

Vice-Chairmen: John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland)
Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland)

6. At the 10th meeting, on ___ April 1997, Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland) was elected to serve also as Rapporteur.

D. Agenda and organization of work

7. At the 1st meeting, on 8 April 1997, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document E/CN.17/1997/1, and approved its organization of work, as circulated in an informal paper. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

4. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

5. Other matters.

6. Provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifth session.

E. Documentation

8. The documents before the Commission at its fifth session are listed in annex ___ to the present report.

UNITED NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.2
16 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with children and youth

(11 April 1997)

Chairman: Ambassador John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitators: Ms. Danijela Zunec, Rescue Mission-Croatia, and Mr. Peter Wilson, Global Kids, Jamaica/USA

Presenters: Representatives of the following non-governmental youth organizations made presentations: Rescue Mission: Planet Earth; Canadian Environmental Network-Youth Caucus; Latin American Youth Network (REJULADS); Q2000; PlayFair! Europe; International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations; ASEED-Europe, ASEED-Japan, and ASEED-Australia; Students Partnership Worldwide; and, Global Kids, Jamaica/USA

PRESENTATIONS

The panellists highlighted the importance of chapter 25 (Children and youth in sustainable development) of Agenda 21. In describing their numerous activities, youth participants demonstrated the unique role that young people play in furthering the implementation of Agenda 21. Youth participants also

discussed the major obstacles they are encountering and outlined priorities for the future.

Activities

As described in their presentations, young people are undertaking a diverse array of sustainable development initiatives. Their efforts aim at raising awareness, strengthening bilateral partnerships, improving the environment, and addressing social problems. Some of these activities are listed below.

- School seminars, theatre productions, posters, stickers, newsletters, web sites, protests, lobbying, and participation in local decision-making have been instrumental in promoting understanding of, and attention to, sustainable development.

- The Children's Version of Agenda 21, and two reports on sustainability indicators (Mission Made Possible, 1996, and Future Watch, 1997), prepared by the Rescue Mission: Planet Earth network, have increased the accessibility of the sustainable development concept to young people around the world.

- Bilateral cooperation (Japanese/Swedish partners and Canadian/Latin American partners) have built youth partnerships for sustainable development beyond national borders.

- Recycling, reuse and regeneration, tree planting and stream enhancement have been important efforts in directly improving the environment.

- Young people have helped direct attention to social problems such as homelessness. A video made by Global Kids, for example, depicts the perspectives of the homeless and the problems they face, and proposes possible solutions.

Obstacles

Despite their numerous achievements, youth participants pointed out that certain obstacles prevent them from making even greater contributions to sustainable development. As described below, these obstacles involve lack of awareness regarding sustainability issues, limited access to information and decision-making, political corruption, gender inequities and consumerism.

- Few local people are aware of Agenda 21 and Governments are reluctant to assume leadership to run national awareness-raising campaigns.

- The closed, bureaucratic nature of many Governments reduce adequate youth access to information or participation in decision-making.

- The low attendance of delegations at the dialogue session reflects some of the problems young people face in getting Governments to listen to them.

- In some Governments, corruption prevents realization of sustainable development.

- Gender prejudices in some countries diminish the education of women and young girls, thereby weakening efforts for a sustainable world.

- Current patterns of consumption are a threat to sustainable development in many areas.

Priorities

Youth participants highlighted three priority areas for the future: funding, education and participation. As indicated below, progress in these areas is important for furthering the involvement of youth in future sustainable development efforts.

- Young people constitute 50 per cent of the population. The allocation of government funds should be more transparent and should better reflect the size of the youth constituency.

- Education is essential for promoting sustainability and should be strengthened via partnerships between schools, Governments, universities and non-formal educators, and attention to the preservation of indigenous resources and practices.

- Young people themselves can be important in educating and raising awareness not only among themselves (through peer education) but also among adults.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Jamaica, Jordan, France, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Romania, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America. The representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) made a statement. The representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) also made a statement.

In their statements, government representatives commended the youth groups on their accomplishments, particularly for their work on sustainable development indicators and their other awareness-raising efforts (United States and Jamaica). Some representatives stated that the low attendance at the meeting was due to many simultaneous meetings rather than a lack of interests on the part of Governments (Belgium). One representative noted that some of the young panellists might become government representatives themselves and that they should remember the empty seats today to make sure that they were not empty in the future (Hungary).

Several government representatives provided advice for the future. One representative advised the panellists to be more demanding of Governments and to secure media coverage for their presentations (United Republic of Tanzania). Others advised young people to demonstrate sustainable lifestyles (United Kingdom) and some suggested involving more young people in future United Nations

meetings. One representative requested the panellists to outline their hopes for the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly (Canada).

Comments were also made on financial and economic issues. Child labour, for example, is a serious problem in some countries and one which youth participants might wish to confront (ICFTU). Children and youth are often the target of those who want to promote unsustainable consumption patterns (Philippines). Yet peer education can be instrumental in resisting adoption of such patterns (Ireland). Micro-financing can be important for youth at local to national levels (Uganda).

In responding to these comments, panellists acknowledged the importance of micro-financing and highlighted various forms of effective education. They also emphasized the need for activities at the grass-roots level; increased access to information; new and innovative endeavours to involve youth; financial commitments; and new ways for designing education.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Commission on Sustainable Development should acknowledge and aim at furthering the efforts of young people concerned about sustainable development. Some ways to encourage the enthusiasm, creativity and commitment exhibited by these young people are described below:

- Recognize that young people have much to offer and allow them to exercise their skills for sustainable development efforts within the United Nations.

- Encourage Governments to supply funding for youth activities.

- Establish a Commission on Sustainable Development youth consultancy programme (a pilot effort in this area in 1996 has enabled young people to participate directly in Commission activities and enhance their global network).

- Include youth in international forums and promote attention to youth concerns and contributions.

- Encourage countries to include youth representatives in national delegations to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

- Work to allow young people access to information.

- Promote innovative forms of education and creative ways to involve youth in decision-making processes.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.3
16 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with scientific and technological communities

(11 April 1997)

Chairman: Ambassador John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Ms. Julia Marton-Lefevre, Executive Director, International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU)

Presenters: Representatives of the following organizations and programmes made presentations: Partner Programmes on Environmental Science (ICSU); Third World Academy of Sciences; Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (ICSU); World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO); Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training (START); Committee for the International Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Programme (IHDP); Species Survival Commission (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)).

PRESENTATIONS

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Scientists around the world, particularly those from the ICSU and IUCN networks, have been contributing to the field of environment and development for several decades, most notably through contributions to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972, Stockholm) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992, Rio de Janeiro). In their presentations, scientists noted their current activities, the obstacles they face and priorities for the future.

Activities

Panellists highlighted ongoing research and observation programmes, growing recognition of sustainable development issues, and partnerships that link the scientific community with other groups.

- The research community is no longer in an 'ivory tower'. Research and observation programmes encompass physical and social science activities and seek to provide useful information. The World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) aims at improving prediction of the physical climate. The International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP) investigates the effects of global change on ecosystems. The Diversitas programme coordinates research into biological diversity issues. The International Human Dimensions of Global Change Programme (IHDP) enhances understanding of the social and economic driving forces behind global change, as well as the impacts of and responses to that change.

- There is an important need for local solutions and the engagement of local expertise, particularly in the developing countries, in addressing sustainability challenges. Many scientific organizations are therefore focusing on capacity-building.

- Scientific organizations are developing advisory support round tables and partnerships with other major groups such as business and industry, to cultivate relationships that enhance scientific interface in global change.

- Some professional organizations, such as the American Society of Civil Engineers, have incorporated sustainable development principles in their code of ethics.

Obstacles

Obstacles to furthering science for environment and development involve funding, relationships between different disciplinary cultures, inequities between North and South, and difficulties in engaging the policy community. For example:

- Funds for research in the areas of sustainable development are often lacking.

- Research on sustainable development issues requires expertise from many different disciplines. Scientists with different backgrounds are still unaccustomed to working together.

- There is a shortage of developing country scientists and those that are available have inadequate participation in and inadequate access to decision-making processes.

- Scientists are often unable to engage the policy community effectively.

Priorities

Panellists outlined several priority areas. These address relationships within the scientific community, as well as those between that community, policy makers and the public.

- Multidisciplinary partnerships among natural scientists, social scientists and engineers are important for sustainable development.

- Women should play a larger role in science and technology endeavours.

- Regional and interregional cooperation is important for sustainable development.

- Science should be directed towards applicable, problem-solving efforts.

- Engineers should consider long-term costs in their design processes.

- Policy should be based on sound science, and dialogue between science and policy communities should increase.

- Public awareness of science and scientific knowledge related to sustainable development need to be further cultivated.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements: Czech Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Philippines, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America. A statement was also made by the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Some representatives requested scientists to comment more specifically on what they want from Governments (Norway and Switzerland). Several representatives noted the importance of improving public understanding of sustainable development and the scientific knowledge needed for it (United States, Indonesia). Others noted the lack of scientific information in the media (Czech Republic), and the difficulties in understanding the scientific information that is disseminated (Ghana). Some representatives noted links between science and Government (Japan) and between the scientific community and private sector research and development (Philippines). Others asked about best and worst practice issues (United Kingdom) and about the efficacy of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (Malaysia). UNESCO highlighted the urgent need to increase scientific

capacity and funding for science and technology at both the national and international levels.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Some challenges and recommendations are set out below.

- Encourage support for basic science education and research for environment and development issues.
- Assist developing countries in national scientific capacity-building.
- Support coordination within the scientific community.
- Raise public awareness of scientific and technological issues related to sustainable development.
- Package scientific information such that it is understandable and accessible by ordinary citizens as well as policy makers.
- Facilitate dialogue between scientists and decision makers.
- Compile and disseminate information on lessons learned in science and technology.
- Improve relationships between the scientific community and the media.
- Give greater attention to research and development activities in the private sector.
- Create direct dialogue opportunities between the Commission on Sustainable Development and the representatives of the scientific community on specific topical areas of sustainable development.

UNITED NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.4
16 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with workers and trade unions

(14 April 1997)

Chairman: Ambassador Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable development

Facilitator: Ms. Clayola Brown, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), United States of America

Presenters: Representatives of the following organizations and programmes made presentations: Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, United States of America; Central Unica dos Trabalhadores, Brazil; Graphical Workers' Union, Sweden; Canadian Labor Congress; Mine, Geological and Oil Workers, Czech Republic; Laborers' International Union, United States of America; Zimbabwe Council of Trade Unions; Indian National Trade Union Congress; Worker Education and Environment, ACTRAV/ILO Project; Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees; Trades Union Congress; Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union.

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PRESENTATIONS

Many global sustainability problems, such as hunger, ill-health, illiteracy, unemployment, industrial accidents and social tensions, have actually increased since the 1992 Rio Conference. Trade unions have recognized these trends and want to address them. Trade unions have therefore collected success stories and extracted from them the concept of "collective engagement". This engagement entails education, consultation and action which harnesses the energies of workers and other members of society in transforming ideas about sustainable development into action.

Activities

Trade unionists have undertaken a spectrum of activities ranging from harmonization and standard-setting to eco-labelling. The following are examples:

- Tripartite negotiations involving industry, workers and government in Brazil resulted in an accord regarding control of chemicals, such as benzene, in the workplace.

- Cooperative efforts between municipal officials, unions and industry in Sweden led to the development of ecologically friendly practices in the printing industry. The holistic approach adopted led to substitution and recycling of chemicals and improvements in water quality and biological diversity.

- The latest session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety has seen increased cooperation between labour and international environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- Trade unions have worked through national delegations to support progressive standards of chemical labelling.

- A union of mine workers from the Czech Republic engaged the expertise of Cornell University to help the union raise the ecological consciousness of its members and other community members via training and participation in eco-audits.

- The Laborers' International Union of North America has contributed to remediation and environmental clean-up concerning hazardous wastes.

- The Zimbabwe Council of Trade Unions helped to identify how trade unions in developing countries can help to alleviate poverty.

- The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees has carried out eco-labelling and integrated office management programmes.

- Groups in the United Kingdom have developed the EcoManagement and Audit Scheme, which involves monitoring, observing, record-keeping, reporting, evaluating and making changes in regard to worksite health, safety and environment programmes.

- The Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union illustrated how enforceable codes of conduct might be used as mechanisms for implementing sustainable development.

- The ACTRAV/ILO Project has developed extensive training materials and programmes around ILO conventions and recommendations as sustainable development indicators.

Obstacles

Trade unions identified several obstacles to their sustainable development efforts and to the realization of sustainable development in general. Foremost among these are obstacles concerning lack of workers' rights, barriers to participation, and insufficient funds. For example:

- International organizations often do not recognize the role that workers and trade unions play and can play in furthering sustainable development through workplace cooperation.

- Workers are often denied their rights, particularly the freedom to associate.

- Governments and other social groups have resisted the participation of trade unions in collective efforts to address sustainable development issues.

- Trade unions' efforts to further sustainable development require monetary resources, resources which international organizations and other donor institutions are not readily providing.

- Poverty is an obstacle to sustainable development in general and therefore frustrates the efforts of trade unions in attempting to further sustainable practices.

- Distortions in the global trading system obstruct efforts to realize a sustainable world.

- Provisions for capacity-building have not been effective, particularly regarding chapter 19, section B, of Agenda 21 on the harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals.

Priorities

Many of the following priorities point towards increased awareness of trade union interest in sustainable development:

- Put the workplace at the top of the sustainable development agenda, particularly with respect to production and consumption patterns.

- Encourage the active participation of workers in workplace environmental audits.

- Encourage trade union/employer partnerships and agreements in implementing Agenda 21 objectives.

- Gain access to decision-making bodies that address sustainable development issues.

- Ensure workers' rights throughout the world.

- Address people's immediate needs, especially those arising from poverty, before pursuing sustainable development.

- Address the political, social and economic issues attendant to sustainable development.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements: Ecuador, Netherlands, Philippines, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America. A statement was also made by the representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNDP).

One government representative welcomed the concept of collective engagement and asked how to further the realization of this concept (United States). Others asked about the applicability of the EcoManagement and Auditing Scheme (EMAS) in developing countries and the relationship between EMAS and ISO 14,000. One government representative warned against reliance on market forces (Netherlands). Those who noted the growing importance of informal economies and the absence of the right mechanisms to deal with sustainability also called for national systems of regulation to ensure health and environmental protection (Ecuador). One government representative noted that NGOs were the main forces resisting the inclusion of trade unions on his country's Council for Sustainable Development (Philippines). The representative of UNEP posed a question on the involvement of workers and trade unions in voluntary environmental codes and programmes that are being developed by business and industry.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Challenges and recommendations focused on increased recognition of linkages between sustainable development and the workplace, as well as greater worker and trade union participation in decision-making bodies. For example:

- Put the workplace at the top of the sustainable development agenda, especially for changes to production and consumption patterns.

- Recognize the role that trade unions can play in furthering sustainable development.

- Encourage cooperation among employers, workers and Governments.

- Support ILO initiatives and work to integrate ILO programmes and sustainable development activities.

- Encourage Governments to develop workplace linkages to national reporting and monitoring systems.

- Encourage Governments to include trade union representatives in decision-making regarding sustainable development.

- Support making eco-management and audit practices compulsory, open to the public and independently validated.

- Urge Governments to support NGOs and trade unions in eco-labelling programmes.

- Encourage environmental education at all levels in the school system.

- Ensure adherence to safety, health, environment and child labour laws in producer countries and promote the use of codes of conduct in implementing sustainable development initiatives.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.5
18 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Summary report of the dialogue session with women

(14 April 1997)

Chairperson: Ambassador Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Ms. Bella Abzug, Women's Environment and Development Organization, United States of America

Presenters: Representatives of the following women's organizations made presentations: Country Women Association of Nigeria; Women Food and Agriculture Working Group/Via Campesina; Central and Eastern European Network for Sustainable Development; Redeh of Brazil; Movement for Nuclear Safety; Women in Europe for a Sustainable Future.

PRESENTATIONS

In the closing years of the twenty-first century, women from all classes, cultures and backgrounds have come to serve as catalysts for environmental and democratic activism. Yet, despite the 1995 Beijing Conference and the five years that have passed since the Rio Conference, gaps between rich and poor, North and South, and men and women are still prominent features of our society. In their dialogue session with Government, women highlighted these problems, the obstacles they face in confronting them, and recommendations for future action.

Activities

Agenda 21 is seen as the first step towards promoting women's rights and consideration of gender issues at the global level. Since then, other international conferences, particularly the Beijing Conference in 1995, have furthered the objectives outlined in Agenda 21. A number of relevant initiatives have been taken by and for women. For example:

- The Women's Caucus has enabled women to participate in international negotiations and policy-making.

- The 1995 Beijing Conference was instrumental in calling attention to poverty and its effects on the lives of women.

- The 1997 Micro-Summit in Washington, D.C., highlighted the importance of providing credit to poor women. This Summit led to the decision to provide $21.7 billion in micro-credit to poor people by the year 2005.

- The Women's Food Summit called attention to linkages between sustainable development and world food security.

- Local Agenda 21 efforts are successfully under way around the world. They have helped strengthen mechanisms to integrate women in decision-making processes and are helping to alter unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

Obstacles

Women are key to achieving sustainable development. Thus, the inequities and prejudices that confront women also hinder general progress towards sustainability. Specific obstacles concern lack of representation and credit, as well as poverty, trade and debt-related issues.

- Although women constitute over 50 per cent of the world's population, women constitute far less than the same ratio in Governments throughout the world.

- Participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United Nations is limited and stifles the important voice of women.

- Lack of credit for women prevents them from achieving financial independence.

- Barriers to land ownership by women not only stifle their prospects for financial independence but also create disincentives for following sustainable practices.

- Trade imbalances and debt crises contribute to poverty-related problems which are particularly troubling for women.

- The growing emphasis on food as a commodity and on agro-business has negative effects regarding sustainable agriculture and world food security. This has important implications for women farmers, as well as for the well-being of women and children.

- Testing of toxic materials, radioactive pollution and the use of pesticides are violating the health and reproductive rights of women.

- The rights of indigenous women are not recognized.

- Current modes of advertising denigrate women and contribute to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Priorities

Women's representatives raised the following priorities for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development and other actors involved in the sustainable development process:

- Develop mechanisms that promote representation of women in Government.

- Improve access to credit to empower women and combat poverty.

- Make efforts to support women to run for and be elected to government office.

- Provide equal access to education.

- Give more attention to the role of advertising in furthering gender stereotypes and unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

- Identify instruments, such as subsidy removal and taxes, which have been successful in counteracting problematic commercial advertising.

- Learn from the Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

- Examine industrial "hot spots" where careless practices have resulted in environmental damage and deleterious effects regarding women and children.

- Prevent a market in radioactive wastes.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements: Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Representatives of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Campaign for the Earth International, a non-governmental organization, also made statements.

Some government representatives described their efforts in micro-financing (Australia, Bangladesh, Netherlands, Switzerland) and in mainstreaming women's concerns (Philippines, China). Others identified poverty as the main obstacle to achieving the goals outlined at the Beijing Conference and urged countries to promote capacity-building for women and provide special attention to women in indigenous communities (Peru). The representative of INSTRAW noted poverty issues concerning women.

Government representatives also discussed the role of women in agricultural production (Sweden) and trade, including export-driven, monoculture economies (Cuba, Netherlands), food security and hostile food policies (Cuba). One government representative noted linkages between the transboundary movement of hazardous material and women's health (Australia).

Several government representatives noted the importance of addressing the role of men and how men perceive themselves in society (Sweden). Some government representatives noted that gender issues required policies for men as well as women (Sweden, Norway). For example, some countries require parental leave for men (Norway).

One government representative noted that regional or global hot-spot designations are not feasible for certain environmental problems and that national designations would be necessary in most cases (Egypt). Some government representatives noted that the conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women should be incorporated into the decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (Finland).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Identify instruments that have been successful in combating harmful commercial advertising.
- Identify industrial hot spots and prepare a plan to clean these areas.
- Strengthen the role of women in efforts to implement Agenda 21. In doing this, the Commission should examine examples of successful efforts to increase participation.
- Recognize that the outcome of the Micro-Summit has important implications for rural women.
- Earmark 1 per cent of all aid dispersed via the World Bank or regional development banks to assist women.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.5/Rev.1
22 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Summary report of the dialogue session with women

(14 April 1997)

Chairperson: Ms. Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Ms. Bella Abzug, President, Women's Environment and Development Organization, United States of America

Presenters: Representatives of the following women's organizations made presentations: Country Women Association of Nigeria; Women Food and Agriculture Working Group/Via Campesina (United States); Central and Eastern European Network for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Poland); REDEH Network in Defense of Humankind (Brazil); Movement for Nuclear Safety (Russian Federation); NGO Campaign for the Earth Council (Canada); Perzent Center (Pakistan); Red Thread (Guyana).

PRESENTATIONS

Women are represented in and reflect all nine major groups defined in Agenda 21. Women across class, race, ethnicity and location have come to serve as catalysts for environmental and democratic activism. Yet, despite the two years since the 1995 Beijing Conference and the five years that have passed since the Rio Conference, women comprise the majority of the poor, the landless

and the under-fed. In their dialogue session with Government, women highlight these problems, the obstacles they face in confronting them, and made recommendations for future action.

Activities

Women succeeded in gaining a Principle in Rio Declaration, a chapter and over 170 references to them mainstreamed throughout Agenda 21. Thereafter, women ensured that their holistic gender analysis in used the process and documents of other international conferences, particularly the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. A number of relevant initiatives have been taken by and for women. For example:

- The Women's Caucus has enabled women to participate in international negotiations and policy-making.

- The 1995 Beijing Conference was instrumental in calling attention to poverty and its effects on the lives of women.

- The 1997 Micro-Summit in Washington, D.C., highlighted the importance of providing credit to poor women. This Summit led to the decision to provide $21.7 billion in micro-credit to poor people by the year 2005.

- The Women's Food Summit called attention to linkages between sustainable development and world food security.

- Local Agenda 21 efforts are successfully under way around the world. They have helped strengthen mechanisms to integrate women in decision-making processes and are helping to alter unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

Obstacles

Women are key to achieving sustainable development. Thus, the inequities and prejudices that confront women also hinder general progress towards sustainability. Specific obstacles concern lack of representation and credit, as well as poverty, trade and debt-related issues.

- Although women constitute over 50 per cent of the world's population, one constitute far less than the same ratio in Governments throughout the world.

- Participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United Nations is limited and stifles the important voice of women.

- Lack of credit for women prevents them from achieving financial independence.

- Barriers to land ownership by women not only stifle their prospects for financial independence but also create disincentives for following sustainable practices.

Trade imbalances and debt crises contribute to poverty-related problems which are particularly troubling for women.

- The growing emphasis on food as a commodity and on agro-business has negative effects regarding sustainable agriculture and world food security. This has important implications for women farmers, as well as for the well-being of women and children.

- Testing of toxic materials, radioactive pollution and the use of pesticides are violating the health and reproductive rights of women.

- The rights of indigenous women are not recognized.

- Current modes of advertising denigrate women and contribute to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Priorities

Women's representatives raised the following priorities for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development and other actors involved in the sustainable development process:

- Mechanisms that promote representation of women in Government.

- Access to credit to empower women and combat poverty.

- Equal access to education.

- Subsidy removal and taxes that counteract the negative effects of commercial advertising, such as gender stereotyping.

- Learning from the Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

- Action-oriented efforts to deal with industrial 'hot spots' and other environmental hazards such as radioactive waste.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements: Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Representatives of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Campaign for the Earth International, a non-governmental organization, also made statements.

Some government representatives described their efforts in micro-financing (Australia, Bangladesh, Netherlands, Switzerland) and in mainstreaming women's concerns (Philippines, China). Others identified poverty as the main obstacle to achieving the goals outlined at the Beijing Conference and urged countries to promote capacity-building for women and provide special attention to women in

indigenous communities (Peru). The representative of INSTRAW noted poverty issues concerning women.

Government representatives also discussed the role of women in agricultural production (Sweden) and trade, including export-driven, monoculture economies (Cuba, Netherlands), food security and hostile food policies (Cuba). One government representative noted linkages between the transboundary movement of hazardous material and women's health (Australia).

Several government representatives noted the importance of addressing the role of men and how men perceive themselves in society (Sweden). Some government representatives noted that gender issues required policies for men as well as women (Sweden, Norway). For example, some countries require parental leave for men (Norway).

One government representative noted that regional or global hot-spot designations are not feasible for certain environmental problems and that national designations would be necessary in most cases (Egypt). Some government representatives noted that the conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women should be incorporated into the decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (Finland).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure full and equal participation of women in decision-making at every level of all social, political and economic areas.

- Commit the necessary resources and establish time-bound targets for integrating women fully into the development of policies, institutions, mechanisms, implementation and evaluation of all future plans for sustainable development.

- Ensure that women's reproductive and productive contributions are measured, valuated and integrated into national accounts and in the calculation of national wealth.

- Identify industrial hot spots and prepare a plan to clean these areas.

- Regulate commercial advertising and identify instruments to combat its negative effects.

- Ensure that ongoing negotiations on the multilateral agreement on investment will equally address the rights and responsibilities of corporations in sustainable development processes.

- Establish a mechanism within the Commission to monitor and guide the actions of the World Trade Organization.

- Earmark 1 per cent of all funding dispersed via the World Bank, regional development banks and other international financial institutions to support rural women, who make up the main share of the world's 1.3 billion poor.

- Support appropriate and gender-fair education, health, recreation, child-care and other infrastructural systems designed by and for rural communities.

- Promote "sustainable agriculture" rather than "agricultural sustainability".

- Affirm and pledge to reach the Micro-credit Summit (Washington, D.C., February 1997) goal of raising $21.7 billion to ensure that 100 million of the world's poorest women and their families receive credit for self-employment by the year 2005.

- Remove legislative, policy, administrative and customary barriers to women's equal rights to natural resources, including access to and control over land (and other forms of property), credit, inheritance, information, and new technology.

- Strengthen the reporting requirements by Governments to the Commission and improve links with other relevant bodies of the Economic and Social Council such as the Commission on the Status of Women.

- Review and address the impact on women's public and private sector genetic research, bio-prospecting, bio-trade and bio-technology policies and programmes.

- Strengthen the role of women in efforts to implement Agenda 21. In doing this, the Commission should examine examples where efforts to increase participation have been successful and disseminate this information widely.

UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.6
18 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with indigenous people

(15 April 1997)

Chairman: Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Mr. Devashish Roy, Chakma Peoples, Bangladesh (Bangladesh Indigenous and Hill Peoples Association for Advancement)

Presenters: Representatives of the following groups made presentations: Quechua, Ecuador; Kuna People, Panama (International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests); Nuuk, Greenland (Inuit Circumpolar Conference); Maori, New Zealand (Maori Congress); Ogoni, Nigeria (National Youth Council of Ogoni People); Kankanaey, Philippines (Asian Indigenous Women's Network); Quechua, United States (International Indian Treaty Council).

PRESENTATIONS

As noted in the Quechua prayer that opened the session: "people belong to the Earth, the Earth does not belong to them". Although indigenous peoples are mindful of this concept and have much to offer through their sustainable

lifestyles, their needs continue to be overlooked. In the five years since the Rio Conference, indigenous groups have become more vocal and visible at the international level in defence of Mother Earth. However, their situation at the regional, national and local levels has worsened as they confront increased discrimination regarding their economic, social, civil and cultural rights. In their dialogue session, representatives of a number of indigenous communities shared their experiences and highlighted some of the more pressing problems they face. In doing so, they highlighted the important links between the concerns of Indigenous People and other issues outlined in Agenda 21, including poverty, human settlements, rural development, farmers, women, biodiversity and forests.

Activities

Indigenous peoples have championed a number of activities pertaining to sustainable development. These include:

- Continued application of sustainable practices in everyday life.
- Contributions to the preparation of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people.
- Support of international forums concerning forestry, biodiversity and intellectual and cultural property rights.
- Legal action against those pursuing unsustainable mining practices.
- Action that convinced the Government of the United States of America to suspend patenting of genes from the Hagai People of Papua New Guinea.

Obstacles

Obstacles to furthering the cause of indigenous peoples include prejudiced perceptions about indigenous peoples, lack of representation in decision-making forums, globalization and trade barriers.

- Non-indigenous people often hold a prejudiced view of indigenous peoples or stereotype them as "noble savages" with primitive lifestyles and static communities.
- Many non-indigenous people hold a reductionist view in which they fail to recognize the important linkages between indigenous peoples and the ecosystems in which they live.
- Indigenous peoples continue to suffer from poverty, hunger, war, debt, pollution, disease, illiteracy and homelessness caused by unsustainable development.
- Most international agreements fail to address the needs of indigenous peoples adequately. For example, the concept of "territories" does not appear in Agenda 21 or the Forest Principles. Agenda 21 portrays indigenous peoples and their traditional practices as objects of research for commercialization. It also makes little reference to indigenous

peoples in the Arctic regions or to the negative impact of mining activities on indigenous communities.

- Indigenous peoples lack representation in international and national forums.

- Trade barriers instituted by European countries and the United States are often harmful to indigenous peoples (such barriers include the 1983 European ban on seal pelts, the 1991 European ban on importation of wild furs from leg-hold traps and the United States Marine Mammal Protection Act).

- Use of hazardous chemicals, global warming, long-range transboundary air pollution and loss of biological diversity have particularly negative implications for indigenous groups in the Arctic regions.

- Multilateral trading systems, economic globalization and trade liberalization are promoting a free market in which corporations hold a great deal of power, little social responsibility and no local accountability.

- Increased dam building is promoting displacement and marginalization of indigenous peoples.

- Biopiracy, bioengineering and bioprospecting exploit the traditional views and practices of indigenous peoples.

- Development and some conservation programmes often prompt militarization of indigenous peoples' communities and subsequent violations of their rights.

Priorities

- The territorial rights of indigenous peoples should be respected and recognized.

- Indigenous self-determination should be recognized as an integral part of sustainable development.

- Indigenous peoples want to determine their own course of development, control their affairs and resources, and participate directly and fully in decision-making that affects them.

- Indigenous peoples want to exercise rights over the resources of the ecosystems of their traditional territories.

- Indigenous peoples urge further progress and action on international conventions for climate change, biological diversity and long-range transboundary air pollution.

- Indigenous peoples should be represented at the highest level in the United Nations system.

- Sustainable development issues should be addressed in a comprehensive manner and not reduced to isolated sectoral considerations.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following countries made statements: Canada, Denmark, Nigeria, Peru and the United States of America. The representative of a non-governmental organization (NGO) from Guyana and an indigenous peoples' representative from the United States (Sovereign Dineh Nation) also made statements.

Some dialogue participants noted issues regarding indigenous peoples in their countries. In response to a panellist who described the oppression of the Ogoni people in Nigeria, one government representative noted that the Ogoni are considered an ethnic group in Nigeria and not indigenous peoples (Nigeria). Another government representative recalled the numerous problems that indigenous peoples in his country faced including drug trafficking, civil strife, environmental degradation and migration. He expressed solidarity with the panellists (Peru). Other government representatives noted the efforts of their Governments in furthering the interests of indigenous peoples via the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people (Canada) and workshops concerning a permanent forum for indigenous peoples (Canada and Denmark).

Some countries explicitly addressed Arctic Council (Canada, United States) and Dineh Nation issues (United States). In response to an Inuit panellist, one representative noted that his Government believed that forums other than the Arctic Council were more appropriate for addressing marine mammal issues (United States). Another government representative responded that the Arctic Council was capable of making its own decisions (Canada). The Inuit panellist emphasized that acts that prevented the Inuit from using mammal resources were adversely affecting their traditional lives and economies.

The representative of an NGO suggested that international organizations should develop funding criteria to guide decision-making on financing of mining projects (Guyana). An indigenous peoples' representative from the United States called attention to the relocation of her people to make way for coal mines (Sovereign Dineh Nation).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The primary challenges and recommendations for the Commission concern participation, funding, information, biological diversity and trade issues.

- The international community should recognize indigenous peoples as peoples and not as non-governmental organizations.

- The United Nations should establish a permanent forum for indigenous peoples.

- Forest policy forums at all levels must establish mechanisms to ensure equal and full participation of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent people in decision-making.

- The scope of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations should be expanded so as to enable greater participation by representatives of indigenous peoples in the full range of United Nations activities.

- The United Nations should improve the dissemination of information to indigenous peoples.

- The international community should address issues concerning biological diversity, such as biotechnology, bioprospecting and the Human Genome Diversity Project. Institutions and conventions dealing with these issues must allow for the participation of indigenous peoples. A biosafety protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity should be speedily accepted.

Indigenous peoples specifically requested the Commission to:

- Promote the immediate adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of the indigenous people in its current form.

- Examine the impacts of globalization, the World Trade Organization and regional agreements on intellectual property rights (e.g., APEC and NAFTA) on indigenous communities.

- Review the activities of transnational corporations, especially the extractive industries such as mining and timber, and examine the effects of these businesses on indigenous peoples. Methods of conflict resolution should be among the issues considered.

- Promote dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous groups and Governments at the international, national and local levels.

- Participate in the workshop regarding a United Nations permanent forum for indigenous peoples, to be held in Chile in June 1997.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.7
18 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with non-governmental organizations

(15 April 1997)

Chairman: Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Mr. Roberto Bissio, Instituto del Tercer Mundo

Presenters: Representatives of the following organizations made presentations: Environmental Liaison Center International (ELCI); Association of Small Farmers of the Pacific Coast (Costa Rica); Country Women's Association of Nigeria (COWAN); Friends of the Earth International; Environmental Justice Networking Forum (South Africa); Third World Network; Latin American Network on Forests; Consumers International.

PRESENTATIONS

In the five years since the Rio Conference, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an increasingly important role in efforts to further sustainable development throughout the world. In their dialogue session, NGOs highlighted past NGO activities, discussed Agenda 21 implementation at the

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local, national and regional levels and set forth actions for the Commission on Sustainable Development to undertake in the next five years.

Activities

The dialogue session provided a sampling of NGO activities. These included research on Agenda 21 implementation, studies regarding sustainable development indicators and organization of new grass-roots groups. For example:

- A study by ELCI assessed grass-roots action taken on Agenda 21 and made recommendations for the future. The resultant report, entitled "Grass-roots reflection on Agenda 21", reveals that Governments are treating the superficial manifestations of unsustainable practices rather than the underlying causes. Furthermore, local level implementation is not occurring as fast as it should be.

- Friends of the Earth conducted a study of sustainable development indicators.

- NGOs in Costa Rica have improved dialogue with government officials.

- African women have established networks for rural and grass-roots women.

- Women in Nigeria developed a strategy for gaining credit for women.

- NGOs in South Africa are working to further environmental justice issues and develop environmental policies for sustainability.

Obstacles

Obstacles to NGO success under Agenda 21 include ingrained production and consumption patterns, lack of access to decision-making, trade liberalization and low political will in regard to sustainable development issues. For example:

- Government interest is often lacking in regard to Agenda 21 implementation.

- NGOs are often excluded from government decision-making, especially in countries with rigid and closed governmental processes.

- It is often difficult to convince decision makers to act on initiatives developed at the community level.

- Business and industry are often unwilling to become involved with sustainable development issues.

- Inequity at the local, national and global levels obstructs many efforts towards sustainable development.

- Political will is lacking in forestry issues.

- Education is an important yet overlooked component of sustainable development.

- Deregulation and globalization are increasing the power of transnational corporations and increasing the inequities between rich and poor.

- Lack of resources is an important limiting factor for NGOs.

Priorities

NGOs outlined a spectrum of priorities including eco-sufficiency, NGO/government relations, environmental education and trade. For example:

- Eco-sufficiency should replace the concept of eco-efficiency if society is to become truly sustainable.

- Better mechanisms for NGO/government cooperation are needed at the local and national levels.

- Better mechanisms should be developed for communicating local experiences to the global level and fostering learning.

- Capacity-building should occur in the government sector as well as in the NGO sector.

- Education and awareness-raising should play a larger role in sustainable development efforts.

- Governments should honour commitments they have made for technology sharing and technology transfer.

- NGO collaboration with Governments at the local, national and international levels should be enhanced.

- Changes in production and consumption patterns are essential.

- Trade has important impacts on environment and development and should receive high priority in efforts to promote sustainable development.

- Corporate accountability should be addressed explicitly and should ensure attention to social and environmental responsibilities.

DIALOGUE

Representative of the following countries made statements during the dialogue session: Australia, China, Finland, Japan, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, United States of America. Statements were made by the following NGOs: Q2000 of Sweden, NGO Working Group on Women, Health and Environment, NGO Education Caucus, Costa Rican National Council for NGOs, Association of Northern Peoples for Environment and Development. NGOs from Bolivia, Mauritius and the

Russian Federation also made statements, as did the representative of the European Commission.

Several government representatives described local initiatives in their countries. One government representative noted the important role that local municipalities played via monitoring, inspection and enforcement to ensure adherence to environmental standards (Japan). Others noted the positive results that Agenda 21 implementation had yielded in their countries (China, Philippines, Sweden). One NGO representative noted increased coordination between NGOs and Government under Agenda 21 (NGO from Bolivia). Another NGO representative noted the problems of addressing energy and transportation issues in her country (NGO from Sweden). Another noted the lack of NGO participation in policy decision-making (NGO from the Russian Federation).

One government representative elicited several comments from others when she suggested that the Commission on Sustainable Development adopt a procedure instituted under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Australia). For this Convention, NGOs should prepare country reports and Governments would be required to respond to those reports. An NGO panellist responded favourably to the suggestion but noted the financial constraints facing NGOs. Another government representative suggested that NGOs and Governments collaborate on reports, as was done in his country (Philippines).

An NGO representative noted the lack of government reporting to the Commission and inquired about the procedures countries follow in reporting to their constituencies at home (Friends of the Earth). Some government representatives described their reporting procedures. Reporting processes involved numerous stakeholders, meetings, web sites and media (Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, United States).

One NGO representative noted the need for more emphasis on education regarding sustainability issues and noted the lack of educator participation (Education Caucus). Another noted the important educational role that United Nations documents played in her country (NGO from the Russian Federation).

One representative urged that statistics like those presented by Friends of the Earth International be used to convince the unconvinced to take up sustainable development priorities (European Commission). Another suggested that the results of the ELCI study be widely disseminated (NGO from Mauritius).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

NGOs presented several recommendations to the Commission. These recommendations concern increased dialogue between NGOs and Governments, corporate accountability, trade issues and action on forest problems. In particular, NGOs requested the Commission to:

- Encourage dialogue at the local and national levels as well as at the international level.

- Incorporate trade and environment, trade and development, and the intersection of trade, environment and development into Agenda 21 initiatives and into the future work of the Commission.

- Establish a subcommission or panel on trade and sustainable development.

- Initiate a dialogue with the World Trade Organization and its Committee on Trade and Environment.

- Initiate a new round of commodity agreements.

- Facilitate a sustainable development and equity review of World Trade Organization agreements.

- Initiate a review of the World Trade Organization Agriculture Agreement.

- Take up the issue of intellectual property rights and sustainable development.

- Investigate the impacts of liberalization on sustainable development.

- Urge the special session of the General Assembly to adopt a resolution urging States and organizations to implement activities proposed during the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

- Establish a subcommission on corporate accountability.

UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.8
18 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with farmers

(16 April 1997)

Chairman: Ms. Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Ms. Linda Elswick, World Sustainable Agriculture Association, United States of America

Presenters: Farmers representing the following organizations made presentations: Federation of Swedish Farmers; Danish Farmers' Union; National Farmers' Union, Canada; Zambian Women in Agriculture; Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos, Nicaragua; New Brunswick Federation of Agriculture, Canada; Centre for Citizens Initiative - Moscow, Russian Federation; and Karnataka State Farmers Association, India.

PRESENTATIONS

The Earth Summit had heightened awareness of important links among farming, environment and development. Issues concerning food and agriculture transformed the abstract concept of sustainable development into something tangible and meaningful to all people. Trade, the role of women, land tenure, resource conservation and technological development were just a few of the many issues that surfaced in the discussion between farmers and Governments.

Activities

Farmers are undertaking initiatives to promote sustainable agriculture. Some of these activities are indicated below.

- A farming programme in Denmark engaged participants at national and local levels, and allowed farmers to view themselves as an integrated part of society. That programme educated farmers and promoted good farming practices. The programme also established standards for pesticide and fertilizer use, water quality, energy consumption and research.

- Zambian women have organized a programme for women farmers that has empowered women and educated them about farming practices and management.

- With the help of an American non-governmental organization, a group in the Russian Federation developed a consultative process for farmers, with a particular focus on women farmers. That programme educated both producers and consumers about sustainable agriculture.

- Land tenure reforms, rural banks and rural women's services have helped to promote sustainable agriculture in several countries.

- Government-endorsed farmer marketing boards have been especially helpful in promoting sustainable agriculture in Canada.

Obstacles

Obstacles faced by farmers concern poverty, lack of land tenure, trade policies and attitudes towards biological diversity. Examples are given below.

- Farmers, historically, have been viewed as people who exploit the land.

- Insecure land tenure and poverty undermine sustainable farming efforts, especially in developing countries.

- Policies that favour cash crop production often promote unsustainable agriculture.

- The World Trade Organization and trade liberalization have created a watershed of adverse effects on farmers. The global market is determining what is produced, who is producing it and who has control over what is produced. Globalization of the economy has also usurped the place of instruments for ensuring food security, and moved decision-making outside of public institutions.

- For some countries, barriers to export have detrimental effects on their agricultural activities.

- Farmers find it difficult to participate in the international arena for a variety of reasons, including financial constraints.

- Vested interests in industrialized countries refuse to recognize peasants and indigenous peoples as generators, owners and guardians of biodiversity.

- The spread of urban areas threatens agriculture.

- Organic farming receives little attention and recognition from government.

Priorities

- Priorities outlined by farmers address land tenure, partnerships and trade. Examples are set forth below.

- Local solutions and long-term land tenure are imperative for sustainable agriculture.

- Farmers cannot pursue sustainable agriculture alone. Close cooperation between farmers and authorities is essential in establishing laws to govern grazing, bookkeeping, and pesticide and fertilizer use.

- Research is important for furthering agricultural practices. Consequently, farmers should enhance alliances with scientific and technical institutions.

- The effects of trade liberalization on farmers require greater attention.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements during the dialogue session: Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Peru, Philippines, United States of America. Farmers and representatives of non-governmental organizations from the floor also took part in the discussion.

One organic farmer called for increased attention to organic farming (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)). He pointed out the increased demand for organic farming products in Austria, Switzerland and Denmark. The representative of a non-governmental organization noted that the Commission on the Status of Women supported farmers, especially organic farmers. She pointed to references to organic farming by the Fourth World Conference on Women. These references stress linkages between health and agriculture.

Several speakers emphasized problems associated with the World Trade Organization and trade liberalization. One non-governmental organization representative said that farmer marketing boards, backed by Governments, were essential for family farmers. Yet such boards are currently being challenged by the World Trade Organization (Canadian farmer). Another representative of a non-governmental organization (Bolivia) called for protection of rural farmers against free market forces. A panellist described how the World Trade Organization affected land tenure by forcing large groups to buy up smaller farms. One government representative suggested that globalization responded to

consumer demands by establishing lower prices. As an example, he pointed to decreased prices after his Government had joined the European Union (Finland).

One participant noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development in its documentation had failed to mention the Leipzig International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and initiatives under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to agriculture (India). She and others emphasized links between biodiversity and agriculture, biosafety issues and the threat of technological totalitarianism.

One government representative asked how farmers reconciled their roles as business people and guardians of the earth, especially in the third world. He asked about the possibility of having these two roles coincide, especially in the third world (Germany). A panellist responded that legislation was required to help mesh the farmer's different roles. A farmer representing a third world Government stated that the free trade rules were annihilating peasant households because those rules focused on huge environmental subsidies. One government representative considered that the trade rules needed to be rewritten to encourage sustainable agriculture (India).

One government representative asked whether the world's farmers would be capable of feeding the increasing world population. In response, farmers noted the role of technology and local agriculture. One non-governmental organization representative pointed out that the question was one concerning not the quantity of food, but rather its distribution.

One government representative recognized the negative public image of farmers in some countries. He asked whether farmer/consumer group partnerships would be productive (Ireland). A panellist suggested that what consumers said and what they bought were two different matters.

One representative noted that many people in rural communities were landless but contributed to food production as farm workers. He urged Governments to address hunger and undernourishment and stressed that each household unit must be able to meet daily food requirements (Philippines).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Some challenges and recommendations are presented below.

- The international community should take a more comprehensive approach to food security by involving representatives from all sectors of society.

- Increased interaction between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization is needed.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should facilitate approval of the Global Plan of Action and the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources as a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This

requires immediate finalization of the revision to the International Undertaking as a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- There is a need to review, assess and, if necessary, modify existing national legislation and international agreements concerning intellectual property rights, land tenure and seed legislation (also post-World Trade Organization legislation) to ensure that they support and do not run counter to farmers' rights and to the overarching objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- The WTO review process in 1999-2000 should lead to removal of agriculture from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations agreements and to the elimination of trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) in agriculture.

- There should be a moratorium on bioprospecting activities.

- There should be a moratorium on the release of genetically modified plant varieties and organisms.

- Developed countries and agribusinesses should provide compensation for the developing-country knowledge and resources that they have been using for many years.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should promote the establishment of a permanent working group on farmers' rights, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

- An international convention to address farmer's rights and sustainable agriculture issues would help to build accountability within the structure of international law.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should arrange for consultative status for farmers as a major group by the time of the special session of the General Assembly.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.8/Rev.1
22 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with farmers

(16 April 1997)

Chairman: Ms. Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Ms. Linda Elswick, World Sustainable Agriculture Association, United States of America

Presenters: Farmers representing the following organizations made presentations: Federation of Swedish Farmers; Danish Farmers' Union; National Farmers' Union, Canada; Zambian Women in Agriculture; Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos, Nicaragua; New Brunswick Federation of Agriculture, Canada; Centre for Citizens Initiative - Moscow, Russian Federation; and Karnataka State Farmers Association, India.

PRESENTATIONS

The Earth Summit had heightened awareness of important links among farming, environment and development. Farmers have a greater awareness of their environmental responsibilities to society, are increasingly addressing environmental impacts of their practices as well as identifying and carrying out solutions. Issues concerning food and agriculture transformed the abstract concept of sustainable development into something tangible and meaningful to all

people. Farm manag ment and res urce conservation, technological developments, land tenure trade, and the r le of wome were ju t a fe of the many issues that surfaced in the discussion betw en farmers nd Governments.

Activities

Farmers are underta ing initia ives to promote sustainable agricu ture. Some o these activities are indicat d below.

- A voluntary farm programme in Denmark en a ed artic pants at nation l an local levels, a d allowed rmers to view the selves as an integrated p rt of society. That programme educated farmers and promoted good farming practi es. The progr mme also esta lished standards for pesticide an fertilizer us , animal manure, water quality, ener consumption nd research. It was carried out thr ugh a combination of far er participation in the regulatory pr cess and support of consumers.

- Various other programmes such as environmental far plans based on self-evaluation, eco-audits and codes of good farm practice have been i iti te (Canada, Sweden).

- ambian w men hav organized a programme for women farmer that has empowered women and ducated them about sustainable farming prac ices and management.

- With the help of an Ame ican non-g vernmental organization, a group in th Russian Federation dev loped a consultative process for farmers, with a particular fo us o women farmers. That programme educated both producers an consumers about sustainable agriculture.

- Land tenure reforms, agricultural cooperatives, rural banks and rur l women's services have helped in creating a sup o tive economic and social framework for sustaina le agriculture in several countri s.

Obstacles

O stacles faced by farmers concern povert and low farm income, lack of land tenure, trade policies and titudes towards biological diversity. Examples are given below.

- Farme s, hist r cally, have been viewed a people who explo t the l nd.

- In ecure lan tenure and pov rty, government eglect and lack of investment in rural areas undermine sustainable farmin efforts, specia ly in developing count ies.

- Low net farm i comes force farmers to consider only the short-term an not to take nto account the long-term effects of their activities on he environment. Furthermore, such low prospects do not attract young people int farming, which is leading to an agein farming popu ation (in industri lized countries) or th feminization of a riculture (in developing countries).

- Policies that favour cash crop producti n can lead to unsustainab e agriculture.

- The W rld Trade Or anization and trade liberalization have create a watershed of adverse effects on farmers. The global market is determining wh t is produc d, who is produ ing it nd who has control over what is produced. Glob lization of the economy has also usurped the place of instruments for ensur ng food security, and moved decision m king out i e of public institutions.

  For some countries, barriers to ex ort, especially escalating tariffs n proce se and semi-processed agricultural products, have detrimental effects on their agricultu al activities and deny them the opportunity to d ve op domestic agro-industrial processing.

- Farmers find it difficult to participate in the international arena for a variety of reasons, inclu i g financial constraints.

  Vested inte ests 'n industrialized co ntries refus to recognize p sants and indigenous peoples as generators, ow ers and guardians of biodiversit .

- The spread of urban and 'ndustrial ar as threatens prime agricultural land.

- Organ c farming receives little attention and recognition from government.

Priorities

- Priorities outlined y armers address environm ntally s und farming technique , land tenure, partner hips and trade. Examples are set for below.

- Identifying problem using local knowledge and seeking local solutions and long-term land tenure are impe ative for sustainable agriculture.

- Agricultur is a long-term business. Farmers, there ore, eed a long-term, predictable pers ective nd olicy environment in which to work.

  Farm rs a not pursue sustainabl agriculture alone. lose coopera ion between f rme s and authorities is essential in establishin a legislative framewor in such areas as the use of ma ure, fe tilizer and pestici es, animal inten ity, and rot cted n tural a eas.

- Research is important for furthering the use of agricultural practices. Consequently, farmers should enhance alliances with sci ntific and technical institutions.

- Improved dialogue with agro-industry, environmental and conservation groups and with consumer associations is also necessary.

- The effects of trade liberalization on farmers require greater attention.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements during the dialogue session: Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Peru, Philippines, United States of America. Farmers and representatives of non-governmental organizations from the floor also took part in the discussion.

One organic farmer called for increased attention to organic farming (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)). He pointed out the increased demand for organic farming products in Austria, Switzerland and Denmark. The representative of a non-governmental organization noted that the Commission on the Status of Women supported farmers, especially organic farmers. She pointed to references to organic farming by the Fourth World Conference on Women. These references stress linkages between health and agriculture.

Although changes in production methods could lead to extra costs for farmers, a panellist noted that there are win-win situations where, for example, a reduction in the use of inputs through better management practices leads to a decrease both in costs and in the impact on the environment. Another panellist added that environmentally friendly production methods also make good business sense, since consumers are increasingly demanding that agricultural production take the environment into consideration.

Several speakers emphasized problems associated with the World Trade Organization and trade liberalization. One non-governmental organization representative said that farmer marketing boards, backed by Governments, were essential for family farmers. Yet such boards are currently being challenged by the World Trade Organization (Canadian farmer). Another representative of a non-governmental organization (Bolivia) called for protection of rural farmers against free market forces. One government representative suggested that globalization responded to consumer demands by establishing lower prices. As an example, he pointed to decreased prices after his Government had joined the European Union (Finland). A farmer pointed out that not all farmers were benefiting from the so-called free trade (farmer from Nicaragua). Even when they wish to export their products, there are still trade barriers and the dumping of subsidized products continues to threaten the livelihoods of domestic products.

One participant noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development in its documentation had failed to mention the Leipzig International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and initiatives under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to agriculture (India). She and others emphasized links between biodiversity and agriculture, biosafety issues and the threat of technological totalitarianism.

One government representative asked how farmers reconciled their roles as business people and guardians of the earth, especially in the third world. He asked about the possibility of having these two roles coincide, especially in the third world (Germany). A panellist responded that legislation was required to help mesh the farmer's different roles. A farmer representing a third world

Government called attention to the fact that environmental subsidies in one country can impact on another country's agricultural sector annihilating peasant households and small-scale agriculture. One government representative considered that the trade rules needed to be rewritten to encourage sustainable agriculture (India).

One government representative asked whether the world's farmers would be capable of feeding the increasing world population. In response, farmers noted the role of technology and local agriculture. One non-governmental organization representative pointed out that the question was one concerning not the quantity of food, but rather its distribution.

One government representative recognized the negative public image of farmers in some countries. He asked whether farmer/consumer group partnerships would be productive (Ireland). A panellist suggested that what consumers said and what they bought were two different matters. Farmers will produce what consumers want. In some cases, they have to be prepared to pay higher prices for food products.

One representative noted that many people in rural communities were landless but contributed to food production as farm workers. He urged Governments to address hunger and undernourishment and stressed that each household unit must be able to meet daily food requirements (Philippines).

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Some challenges and recommendations are presented below.

- The international community should take a more comprehensive approach to food security by involving representatives from all sectors of society.

- Farmers' organizations should be included in national delegations attending meetings that discuss issues related to the agricultural sector.

- Increased interaction between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization is needed.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should facilitate approval of the Global Plan of Action and the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources as a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This requires immediate finalization of the revision to the International Undertaking as a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- There is a need to review, assess and, if necessary, modify existing national legislation and international agreements concerning intellectual property rights, land tenure and seed legislation (also post-World Trade Organization legislation) to ensure that they support and do not run counter to farmers' rights and to the overarching objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- The WTO review process in 1999-2000 should lea to remo al of agriculture from the Uruguay Round of multila eral trade negotiations agreemen s and to the elimination of trade-rela ed intellectual property rights (TRIP) in agriculture.

- There should be a moratorium on bioprospecting activities, as well as on the release of genetically modified plant varieties and organisms.

- Developed countries and agribusinesses hould provide compensation for the developing-country knowledge and resources that they have been using for many years.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should promote the establishment of a permanent working group on farmers' rights, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

- An international convention to address farmer's rights and sustainable agriculture issues would help to build accountability within the structure of international law.

- The Commission on Sustainable Development should arrange for consultative status for farmers as a major group by the time of the special session of the General Assembly.

- Farmers' organizations, specially those from the developing countries and in countries in transition, should be supported and strengthened to become effective partners in policy design and implementation.

- Public research on sustainable farming practices, improved cropping methods and extension services should be increased at all levels.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.9
18 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with local authorities

(16 April 1997)

Chairman: Ambassador Bagher Asadi, (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitators: Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC)

Mr. Jeb Brugman, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)

Presenters: Representatives and mayors of the following organizations and/or municipalities made presentations: World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC); Dubai Municipality; Policy Committee, Corporation of London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; City of Marrakech, Morocco; Barcelona, Spain; Cajamarca Municipality/Association of Peruvian Municipalities; Leicester City Council, United Kingdom; and International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

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PRESENTATIONS

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro, local authorities have been actively implementing their responsibilities as identified in Agenda 21. More than 1,800 local authorities from 64 countries have established Local Agenda 21 processes. They are working to reorganize themselves and change mindsets and practices in order to become more effective agents of sustainable development. They are establishing new mechanisms for international cooperation with each other and the United Nations system, as attested, for example, by the establishment of WACLAC. In their 1995 meeting with the Commission on Sustainable Development, local authorities called for greater recognition of their key role in sustainable development. In contrast, they are now focusing on the key issues and obstacles with respect to implementing Agenda 21 at the local level.

Activities

Local authorities from around the world spoke about Local Agenda 21 initiatives in their communities. These efforts are described below.

- Local authorities have been heavily involved with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

- The United Arab Emirates have developed a best practices competition to encourage sustainable development activities.

- The City of London has undertaken a number of Local Agenda 21 initiatives. A focal point of its efforts involves steering groups and task forces comprising a wide range of stakeholders. These groups have developed and launched plans on a number of Agenda 21 issues including energy, health and the natural environment. The City of London has also established a green belt to ensure open spaces; created the first smoke control zone; increased use of public transport; launched an environmental forum on environmental risk management; and undertaken a major regeneration study. Other London-based programmes are providing support to local authorities in Africa and examining sustainability indicators.

- Development of a sanitation programme in Marrakech involved national/local government cooperation, a tax financing programme, citizen participation and privatization. Other Marrakech projects are providing housing to low income people and restoring historic sites in Marrakech.

- Barcelona is working to implement Agenda 21 via a consensus-building forum. Components of the Barcelona process include decentralization and citizen participation.

- Leicester City Council reported on a national campaign for Local Agenda 21. This campaign provides training, guidance, research and technical support to local authorities and communities for Local Agenda 21 planning and implementation. The campaign has recruited 75 per cent of local authorities to establish a multisectoral forum to oversee planning of Local

Agenda 21 implementation. The campaign has also resulted in a survey, which indicates considerable progress concerning awareness and implementation of Agenda 21 throughout the United Kingdom.

- In countries such as the United Kingdom and Sweden, national campaign are proving instrumental in implementing Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

Obstacles

Local authorities highlighted the obstacles they face in implementing Local Agenda 21. These obstacles include lack of political will; insufficient resources; absence of partnerships; and policies that promote unsustainable practices. Specific difficulties include those described below.

- Partnerships between national and local governments are often underdeveloped.

- In some cases, national Governments and their policies pose the most important barriers to Local Agenda 21 implementation. These obstacles include lack of interest in and attention to Agenda 21; absence of integrated transportation policies; unsustainable energy policies; lack of tax raising powers; and poor enforcement of environmental laws.

- Subsidies that encourage unsustainable practices also pose problems in many countries.

- Banking institutions often overlook the social value of agriculture programmes which are in urgent need of financial assistance.

Priorities

The priorities outlined by local authorities reflect the obstacles they wish to overcome. Suggestions by local authorities include calls for enhanced local/national partnerships; capacity-building; attention to Agenda 21 and Habitat II objectives; and information networks. More detailed priorities are listed below.

- Develop and enhance partnerships between local and subnational governments, as well as national Governments, to create incentives and overcome disincentives to sustainable practices at the local level.

- Support development of political will to address sustainability issues.

- Build capacities of local authorities particularly in the area of finance, and provide powers equal to responsibilities.

- Legalize and formalize the relationship between the United Nations and international organizations of local authorities.

- Encourage local governments to be proactive through development of strategic plans.

- Increase harmonization of fiscal policy, and the internalization of social and environmental costs.

- Integrate the provisions of Habitat II and Agenda 21.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments made statements during the dialogue session: Australia, China, Netherlands, France, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, United States of America. Statements were also made by the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and by the representative of a non-governmental organization (Brazil).

Several government representatives emphasized the importance of the dialogue with local authorities and acknowledged that the challenge for sustainability ultimately lay within the world's cities (United States, Netherlands).

One government representative noted that local authorities should aim to assist the United Nations rather than seek assistance from it (France). A panellist responded that local authorities should work to ensure that WACLAC became a permanent body, formally recognized by the United Nations. Another panellist noted that local authorities should have a louder voice in the international community in order to ensure balanced partnerships.

Several government representatives discussed Local Agenda 21 initiatives in their countries. One representative described projects concerning lake management, health and strategic development plans (Philippines). Another representative mentioned sustainable development pilot projects in his country (China). Grass-roots groups, non-governmental organizations and other major group representatives have been especially important in sustainable development efforts (Sweden). Australia will be hosting an international conference entitled "Pathways to Sustainability" in Newcastle (1-5 June 1997). That conference will showcase case studies of local initiatives and make a contribution to the special session of the General Assembly (Australia).

One panellist called for a network that would enable local authorities to share experiences and information. One non-governmental organization representative noted the need to coordinate programmes such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Capacity 21 with Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

One government representative commented that local authority proposals did not pay adequate attention to public participation in Local Agenda 21 implementation processes and stressed the importance of engaging private sector representatives early in the process of Local Agenda 21 implementation (United States). Panellists acknowledged that many groups were involved including educators, non-governmental organizations and the private sector and that participation was the foundation of the Local Agenda 21 process. Particular assistance is required to achieve greater private sector participation in Local Agenda 21 activities.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Challenges and recommendations for the Commission on Sustainable Development are aimed at strengthening partnerships among local, subnational and national levels, examining obstacles and promoting decentralization. Local authorities highlighted the following challenges and recommendations.

- National campaigns: Local Agenda 21 programmes should be actively encouraged in each country, particularly through establishment of Local Agenda 21 national campaigns in partnership with local authority associations.

- Global targets and overcoming obstacles: The Commission on Sustainable Development should establish global targets to encourage Local Agenda 21 campaigns, and to review and address obstacles to Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

- Fresh water: The international community should provide an enabling environment that encourages subnational and local authorities (with investments from public and private sources) to extend and increase efficiency of water supply and sanitation services, especially in fast-growing urban areas and poor rural communities.

- Decentralization: Trends towards decentralization of government to local levels should be recognized and support should be given to local authorities to assist in implementation of their new governance and service provision responsibilities.

- Study of national barriers to Local Agenda 21 implementation: Other proposals requested the Commission on Sustainable Development to commission a study that examined barriers (especially those erected and maintained by national Governments) to Local Agenda 21 implementation. Barriers may concern transportation, energy, tax policies, subsidies and poor enforcement of regulations.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1997/L.10
21 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fifth session
8-25 April 1997
Agenda item 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

DIALOGUE SESSIONS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Summary report of the dialogue session with business and industry (18 April 1997)

Chairman: Ambassador John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Sustainable Development

Facilitators: Mrs. Maria Cattaui, International Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Bjorn Stigson, World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Presenters: Representatives of the following organizations and corporations made presentations: Xerox Corporation; ICI; EnviroServe; Scudder, Stevens and Clark; Tokyo Electric Power Company; British Petroleum Company; Aracruz Celulose; International Chamber of Commerce; World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD); Dow Chemical; Grupo IMSA.

PRESENTATIONS

Business has made progress towards sustainable development (examples were presented from the following reports: "Signals of Change" by WBCSD and "Implementation of the ICC Business Charter for Sustainable Development" by ICC). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, companies focused on pollution cleanup and end-of-pipe measures. Today, many of the world's leading companies have

adopted more integrated efforts. These involve a sys ems a proach to environ ent l ma agement, partnerships wit government and s ak holders and corporate respo sibility throughout the pr duct life-cyc e. However, business and i dustry are still in the early stage of their "gre n" revoluti n, and they hav yet to enga e many sma l and medium- ized ente prises (SME), especially those in developing count es.

ctivities

The busi ess commu ity ha initiated several projects a d progra e to pr mote sustainable development. Some example of these "signals of chan e" w re presented by th panel, inc uding:

- The Intern ti nal Chamber of Commerce (ICC) developed and launche t e Busi ess Charter for Susta nable Deve opment shortly bef re the Ri Confer nce. Since then, over 2,500 companies worldwide have adopt d the 16 princip es of th B siness Charter and co tinue to impro e he r environmental p licy and practice.

- ICC has promot d eco-labellin , wast management, biodiv rsi y n climate-change-related pol ci s. ICC has also developed an nv onme tal manageme t kit for companies.

  Xerox Corporation has im lemented eco-e fici nc and environmental leadership programme . Th ough partnerships with government and stakeholders, X rox Corporation aims at achieving was e elimination, product stew rdship, safe products, ze o employee i uries and worldwide co pliance with regulations. Specific efforts inclu e programmes for print and ton r cartridge etu n and waste-free factories.

- ICI has instituted a comprehe sive Safety, Health and Environme tal M nage ent System. This ystem tilizes tools to promote sustainable practices. These inclu e standar s, guidelines local p ocedures auditing, le ters of assura ce, and performance and policy reviews.

  Many comp ies are im le.en ing syste.s for indep den verificatio and perform nce reviews. The Eco Managemen a Audit Scheme (EMA) is a example of such a pr gr e.

- The c emical ind stry has implemented a "Responsible Care" progra e t at involves environm ntal and social reporting, business charters a d princ ples, and e iron ental manageme t systems standards.

- Thirty-six industries and 137 busines associations in Japan have dev loped Indu try-oriented E v ronmental Action Plans.

  Scudder, Stev ns and Cl rk serves as an inve ment manager for the Sto ebrand, Scudder Environmental Value Fun . The two ob ectives of this fund are (i) to provide comp titive returns against the Morgan t nley World Index and (ii to demonstra e th t superior inves ment returns can be arned by use o environmental analytical dis iplines.

Companies included in the o tfolio are judged agains a series of environmental criteria

- B as deve op d a clear statement of saf ty, heal h, nvironmen al and lon.-term goals. Target and management processes are in place to facilitate the re lization of goals.

- Aracruz elulose commissione the International Institute for nvironmen and Development IIED) to cond ct a st dy on the paper cycle. The study covers all aspects of the sustainable paper cycle and makes conclusions re arding related governme t regulations, eco-lab lling and incin ration.

- En iro erve highlig t d the importance of SMEs in the economi development of countrie such as outh Afric while pinpointi g the difficultie faced in imp o ing their environmental pe formance.

Obstacles

Business and i dust y fa e several obstacles to furth ring sustaina le developme t. These obstacles include difficulties in engaging SMEs and olicies that pro o e unsu tainable practic s. M re specific problems are outline b low:

- Al hough many le d'ng companies have ad pte sust inable development princi le , any MEs la k the resources necessary to follo suit.

- ax s an ubsidies ften promote unsustaina le behaviour.

- Unnecessary regul tions can h'n er the efforts of bus'ness s to promote sustainable dev lopment.

- Some Govern ents and culture iscourage stake older and outreach initiatives on the part of industry.

- Econo ic, s cial and legal ramewor s ften un count r to sustainab'lity.

Priorities

The business community identified several priority areas. These include:

- S stainability requires a long-term view.

- Mutual trust among all stakeholders is essential for sustainable development. This requires transparency and commitments involving principles, report and review, and verification.

- Sustainable development requires cooperation involving all sectors.

- Al business and industry, not just large multinationals, must adopt sustainable development principles.

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- Government must provide the necessary framework for businesses to meet the needs of society and protect the environment. In particular, Governments should provide incentives for sustainability and remove disincentives.

- The developing countries should avoid the past mistakes of the industrialized countries

- Business practices should involve eco-efficiency, life-cycle management, appropriate consumer information environmental accounting and environmental benchmarks.

DIALOGUE

Representatives of the following Governments participated in the discussion: Belgium, China, France, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden, United States of America.

Other dialogue participants included representatives of the Central and Eastern European Network, Friends of the Earth International, Tools for Transition and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

One representative asked about instances of efforts by companies to forestall action on climate change. In particular, he suggested that in acting to protect their short-term profits, the companies were challenging scientific findings regarding global warming. A panelist responded that many business community members want to be involved in the climate change debate and favoured long-term, global solutions. Another panelist recognized the need to change lifestyles, de-couple energy and economic development and adopt alternative energy sources.

One representative noted the difficulty in reconciling industry's preference for voluntary initiatives with the need to have consistency in government policies and environmental standards. He also acknowledged the importance of enabling small and medium-sized businesses (especially those in developing countries) to meet international standards (Belgium). A panelist suggested that big businesses should assist small businesses in adhering to internationally harmonized standards rather than negotiating lower standards for developing countries.

Other comments by government representatives called attention to local participation (United States) and consumer awareness (Peru). One government representative noted that businesses can play an important role in raising environmental consciousness among consumers (Peru). In response, the representative of Xerox Corporation described a communication programme in his company that provided information to salespeople and consumers.

One government representative noted that SME practices were often very harmful to the environment (China). A panelist responded that big businesses needed to support SMEs in their efforts to promote sustainable development.

A non-governmental organization pointed out that environmental degradation resulting from increased volume of production was negating gains in efficiency (Friends of the Earth International). A panelist responded that development, as well as sustainability was necessary and that economic growth meant increased volume of production.

Other government representatives addressed a wide range of topics in their statements. One representative suggested that WBCSD could assist in developing eco-efficiency targets (Netherlands). Another representative noted the complexity of the issues at hand and called for different transparent forums and organizational structures to address those challenges globally and across different scales (South Africa). Another representative raised the issue of technology transfer; he acknowledged the trend towards business-to-business transfer as well as the role that Governments played in providing incentives for such activities (France). A panelist responded by noting the increased flow of technology to developing countries. Another representative suggested that lease-based programmes were often more environmentally sound than other sales approaches.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Commission on Sustainable Development should give close attention to all three aspects of sustainable development - economic growth, social development and environmental protection. It should base its agenda on sound science and careful assessment of risks and economic costs. It should focus in its next phase of work on those issues for which no clear focal point for policy discussion and recommendations has been established in the United Nations system. The business world welcomes a continued systematic dialogue involving major groups, but it is essential that Governments participate actively in this process. Governments should promote sustainable development by:

- Capitalizing on the ability of business and industry to change and adapt quickly.

- Allowing business to chose between a minimum regulatory system or one that permits flexibility of approach in return for higher performance targets.

- Helping to motivate and introduce voluntary systems that encourage responsibility for products throughout their life cycles.

- Examining whether taxes and subsidies promote unsustainable behaviour and changing policies accordingly.

- Moving from income- to consumption-based taxes over a sufficiently long period of time.

- Gradually getting prices right so that products reflect their full environmental costs.

- Re-examining the conventional measure of gross domestic product (GDP) and considering supplementing it with a net-GDP measure that reflects resource depletion.

- Promoting stakeholder outreach and involvement regarding the business role in promoting sustainable development.